

Newcomers shine as Wycombe hit five

WYCOMBE Wanderers went to town on Saturday when they chalked up five goals against Southern League side Redditch. This was the Blues' third friendly win in succession and once again manager Ted Powell introduced more new faces into the side.

England schoolboy Rod Best came in at centre back and partnered Dave Bullock who was also having his first outing of the season. Tony Price, who is back studying at Oxford University, returned upfront while Dave Hatton (full back) and Jim Cox (midfield) both came on after the interval.

Considering they were without several regulars, Wycombe showed a good deal of character and skill in this game. The football at times was excellent with Alan Davies and Gavin Fraser stealing the limelight with two great midfield performances.

But there was another man who took the honours, second half substitute Steve Pratt. He came on for his first game in senior football, having previously played in the Hellenic League with Waddesdon. A big, tall and strong front runner, he looked extremely impressive in the short time available and got into the scoring act with the fourth goal.

Wanderers hope to sign Pratt after this one showing and now manager Powell has five front men already signed on with the possibility of six, if Price also joins again. Powell, who has used over 20 players in these friendlies, will obviously have to start trimming his squad soon. But for a manager who had only two forwards signed on a couple of weeks ago, he has done a fine job in searching out new talent.

Although it must be said that Redditch were a disappointing side, it is still an achievement to put five goals past any opposition and the finishing of the forwards on Saturday augers well for the new season which starts next week with a home league fixture against Tooting. Both Ian Pearson and George Cleary looked extremely useful while Tony Horseman combined well with both. Competition amongst the forwards this season is likely to be particularly tough.

First goal on Saturday came in the 18th minute when Pearson jinked past two defenders on the edge of the box and crossed. Redditch centre back Dave Clements handled in full view of the referee and Pearson stroked home his second penalty of the season.

John Maskell made one point blank save from Smart after 27 minutes but it was Wanderers who looked more likely to score. With Davies buzzing everywhere and Fraser spraying some lovely passes around, they dominated midfield where Redditch paid the price for allowing Wycombe time and space in which to play.

Best saw a 34th minute header palmed over by goalkeeper Edwards and eight minutes later there was a hectic melee inside the Redditch box when Horseman, Fraser and Price all had shots beaten out.

Redditch equalised just before half time when Grenville Baverstock, who had come on for the injured Best, gave away a penalty with his first touch of the ball

Wycombe Wanderers 5, Redditch 2 Report by Stuart Earp

— literally! He handled Taylor's cross and Tuohy scored with ease from the spot.

Wanderers made three half time changes and took only eight minutes to regain their lead. Graham Mackenzie controlled well and crossed to Alan Davies, who made a fine near post run and poked the ball home first time. Davies might have had another two minutes later when he saw his shot roll gently against the upright. Then in the 60th minute Horseman curled a free kick against the crossbar with Edwards beaten.

Against all this pressure, Redditch could offer little in reply. But they pulled out a super move

after 64 minutes to draw level again. Clements played the ball up for Tuohy, ran for the return and side-footed home a fine goal.

The Blues were in front again inside a minute. Pratt powered in a shot which was blocked but Cleary demonstrated his goal poaching talents by pouncing on the rebound and prodding the ball home. Two minutes later Wanderers made it 4-2 with the best goal of the seven. Fraser lofted the ball up to Cleary who nodded down for Pratt to run on and crack a fine drive past Edwards.

In the 75th minute Horseman got into the scoring act when he played a neat 1-2 with Cleary and

chipped the ball over the advancing 'keeper for goal number five.

Wanderers continued to dominate play until the close although Maskell had to come out of his area once to head the ball away as Shaw raced towards goal.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; M. Sorenson, R. Best (sub. G. Baverstock 44 mins), E. Bullock, M. Davies (sub. D. Hatton 45 mins); A. Davies, G. Fraser, G. Mackenzie (sub. J. Cox 56 mins); A. Horseman, I. Pearson (sub. G. Cleary 45 mins), A. Price (sub. E. Pratt 45 mins).

REDDITCH: R. Edwards; P. Smith, R. Grice, S. Chadwick, D. Clements, R. Taylor, B. Kenning, J. Mason; W. Penman, N. Tuohy, R. Shaw.

Referee: R. Sibley.
Half time: 1-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Pearson pen. (18), A. Davies (53), Cleary (65), Pratt (87), Horseman (75). Redditch — Tuohy pen. (44), Clements (64).
Attendance: 450.